

The Philosophical Thinking about the Information Pollution—The Visual Angle Is Academic Cheating [†]

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Abstract: The issue of information pollutions have become more and more serious these days among which the ones produced by academic cheating has the most catastrophic consequence. Academic cheating is rooted in abandon of integrity; the pursuit of individual interests over academic value, and fabrication of fake innovation with repeat or made up facts

Keywords: information pollution; academic cheating; morals; value

1. Information Pollution

The world of information has been severely polluted. Sources of pollution confined to worthless or erroneous information are information pollution in a narrow sense. Information garbage includes redundant information, obscene information, false information, distortion information, wrong information, and outdated information, etc. Among them, redundant information and outdated information may not cause additional harm while obscene information has been getting attention of the society. False information, distorted information and wrong information are all untrue, but there are differences among them essentially: false information is generated intentionally, while distorted information and wrong information can be caused by objective reasons. The key point of purifying information ecology should first aim at false information, including false information created by academic cheating.

2. Academic Cheating

2.1. The Connotation of Academic Cheating

The meaning of academic cheating is the fraudulent practices in the process of research, with result contaminated by false information.

2.1.1. Copy and Plagiarism

The meaning of copy and plagiarism is taking others' result as ones own discover or innovative thoughts. Copy is using the whole or part of the results of others without indicating the source. Obviously copy is the most straightforward encroachment, and the easiest to be found. Therefore, the phenomenon of copy has been becoming less and less, however copying in small scale is less easy to be found and has turned into a form of plagiarism.

Plagiarism is a more subtle form of copy, that is, changing the superficial expression only and use of other people's ideas to publish as their own discovery, and not indicate the source. So the plagiarism is cryptic stealing and an upgraded version of copy, and it's harder to deal with. Hence, the plagiarism is potentially a long lasting problem in academic field.

2.1.2. Counterfeit

The meaning of counterfeit is fabrication or tampering in the process of academic research, the most common of which is the falsification of data, especially in the field of natural science. When a hypothesis is built up, desired conclusion comes out first, and then the ideal data is deduced, at this time tamper with the raw data, modify and select it further, or even invent new data is how counterfeit happens. Besides, fabricating scientific facts also happens: in 1970s, researchers at the Sloan Caitlin Institute for cancer research in the United States painted white-skin mice into black to prove their experiment being successful.

2.2. *The Harm of Academic Cheating*

The production of copy and plagiarism is redundant information virtually, which increases the pollution, but relatively less destructive; the product of counterfeit is false information, which affects the quality of source of information, and is much more detrimental. In the progress of natural science, all new knowledge is based on previous knowledge, and the degree of sharing in natural science is also the widest. Hence, if false information appears in the field of natural science, the harm is amplified.

Supposing that one scientist counterfeits one information X, at the same time the number of scientists who are researching on the base of X may be N, and all these scientists need some expense to buy equipment, materials, etc. The best case scenario might be, over a period of researching, one of the N scientists, scientist A has found the researching failed to push forward, and the root cause being the problematic X, and promptly announced his doubts, and the rest N-1 scientists obtained the information of scientist A and stop using X. Still, time and money of all these scientists have been wasted.

The worse results are: (1) Scientist A find the research could not push forward, and abandoned the research, awaiting for the presence of scientist B to find and announce the problematic X; (2) All of these scientists have abandoned research in this field, but they neither questioned X or published the results of the query. The sad thing of which is that, although a large number of cost has been made, the false information X is not exposed, and more scientists than those N will be potentially harmed by X still; (3) In the process of research of these scientists, X does not stop research, the only effect is the accuracy of the results. Although the development of natural science has the mechanism of self-correction, it does not mean correction timely. This way, this error may be passed on from generation to generation, and the number of scientists affected would be a geometric series of N.

3. Philosophical Reflection on Academic Cheating

3.1. *Morality*

The basic meaning of morality is the principle of responsibility and doing no harm. It represents the positive value of a society. And one of the universal moral standard is integrity, requesting truthful information and no deceit. As academic is the essence of culture and the soul to support the healthy development of a society, a scholar has to be the banner of the ideological field, act as a model in the field of morality, and stick to facts. In addition, only honesty can make academic field innovative, especially in natural science; and the high degree of professionalism in the academic field makes scientists more likely to be good doorkeeper of advancing knowledge. Academic cheating violates the internal requirements of academia, and loses the integrity.

3.2. *Values*

The values is people's overall view of things, which includes: value orientation and value pursuit which condense into a certain value goal; the criterion of value to judge whether something has value or is important, and to judge honor and shame. Because the correct goal of academic research is the pursuit of truth and the sense of responsibility to society, the basic orientation of academic value should be academic. However, the academic goal does not exclude other objects of

the subject, especially in the contemporary era of academic professionalism, and academic people would receive various returns such as salaries, bonuses and promotions. Of course, academic goal is fundamental and personal goals are subordinate, however in reality, some academic people pay more attention to interest, which makes academic goal a tool for only personal interest.

3.3. Information

According to the theory of information of philosopher Kun Wu [1], information is the philosophical category of indirect existence of signs, and is the self display of the existence and the state of matter (direct existence), which include: (1) Free information is the sign of objective and indirect existence, and the original form of information that has not yet been recognized by the subject; (2) Self information is the primary form of subjective indirect existence, it is the free information that the subject intuitively grasps; (3) Regeneration information is the advanced form of subjective indirect existence, the creation of information subject and the conscious activity of human being. Among them, the free information is the source of innovative information, and the innovative information is the basis of the regeneration information. The mission of natural science is to transform free information into innovative information, and then change it to regeneration information. Therefore, in the final analysis, the new information of scientific innovation is the regeneration information, and which is obtained by the thinking of scientists. Among this process, the free information is the object, while innovative information is the intermediary.

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References

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